

POPEY

Provincial Outreach Program for the Early Years

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Literacy Centres Kindergarten - Grade 3





Centre Ideas for Word Work (1 of 2)



Letter Sort - have children sort letters in a variety of different ways. Differentiate instruction by changing how the various groups of students sort letters. Some features can be - letters with a stick, a circle, a dot, a hump, a hook/tail or a slant; upper case & lower case; vowel and consonant. Letters can be made from magnets, foam, tiles, felt or cards.

Make Letters - have children practice writing letters with a variety of different media. This will reinforce the visual features of the letters. Tools can include markers, crayons, pencil crayons, coloured chalk, a drawing app on a computer or tablet, etc...Students can also use wikki stix, play dough, sand, cookie dough, pipe cleaners, shaving cream, jello and more.

Doing ABC puzzles - puzzles help students learn the visual features of letters and become familiar with the order of the alphabet

Letter Dance - letter cards are shown, and students perform an action associated with that letter. Suggestions from Patricia Cunningham in *Phonics They Use* are:

bounce	catch	dance	fall	gallop	hop	jump	laugh	march
nod	paint	run	sit	talk	vacuum	walk	yawn	zip

Word Sort - student sort a variety of words by features such as: number of letters, number of syllables, initial sound, ending sound, vowel pattern, or part of speech. Using word wall words or high-frequency words is a great way for the students to practice at this centre.

Making Words - children can make words with magnetic letters, letter tiles, pasta letters, letter cards, Wikki Stix, letters on a tablet, computer or interactive whiteboard etc...Manipulating letters in this way helps students to identify blends, digraphs and generally how words are formed.

Illustrating Words - children can investigate word meanings by illustrating words in books, on cards, or on a bulletin board display. Provide beginning dictionaries as models. Children might also make their own picture dictionaries



Centre Ideas for Word Work (2 of 2)



Playing Word Games - educational publishers have created several types of word games. They include Boggle Jr, Boggle for Word Families, Scrabble Jr and Concentration.

Chant the Word Wall - students play with various ways to chant the word wall. They can pretend to be cheerleaders, an animal, robots etc...additional ideas are posted online.

Word Hunts - students can look in familiar books and texts for words that have a specific feature. For example, students could look for words that have the long a sound, or are part of the -at word family. Word Hunt sheets can be created to record the words found.

Be a Mind Reader - one student picks a word wall word, or a high frequency word. He/she will provide clues to the rest of the group, so they can guess the word. The students get five clues. Examples of clues are:

"The word is on the word wall. It has 3 letters. It begins with c."

Rainbow Words - students write word wall words or high-frequency words on a piece of paper, chart paper, a tablet or an interactive whiteboard one at a time. Each time a child writes the word overtop of another child's word, a new colour is chosen. The end result is one "no excuses" word in all the colours of the rainbow.

Memory Game - decks of high-frequency cards can be used to play the Memory Game. Two or more children can play this at a centre. For an additional challenge, words in different fonts or a mix-and-match of words spelled in either all upper-case or all lower-case letters can be used.

Word Sort - students sort words by a variety of different attributes - blends, word families etc...words can be on cards, or part of a game on a computer or interactive whiteboard

Break the Word - use Elkonin boxes to have students break up words. One syllable or phoneme is placed in each box. In modelling these activities, the teacher should show how to pronounce each word slowly and stretch each word out. Example:

shirt

sh	ir	t
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Centre Ideas for Writing (1 of 2)



Writing Everything! - a list, a card, a letter, a story, a fact book, a survey... Teachers should model several different types of writing styles and formats during a Write Aloud, Shared Writing &/or Interactive Writing. The work created during the modelling phase can be displayed at the centre to help the children remember the different writing genres.

Write About Everything! - *descriptive writing of something in the room, a classmate, a pet, mom, dad, siblings, the teacher...* Children write well when they can write about real things that they have real experience with. Drawing on people, places and things that they can see, hear, touch, smell and taste can help to produce real and authentic writing experiences.

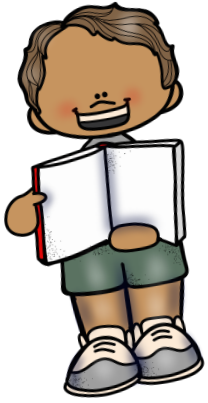
Tell your Story - students can tell each other their story ideas and plans prior to beginning a story. Talk in an important part of the writing process. The teacher should model how to tell personal stories about real events in the class. Children can then share their finished products with the whole class.

You're the Expert! - all children have areas that spark their interest and become experts on that topic. This can be dinosaurs, bugs, trains, hockey, Barbie dolls, unicorns or computers. Children should be encouraged to write about what they know and care about. When they write several times about the same topic, all of the pieces of writing can be combined into a chapter book.

Show Me Your Story - have children draw, take photos, find pictures in magazines etc...to tell their story in pictures first. Then, the writing can follow the story the pictures told. These can be fiction or non-fiction pieces of writing. A variety of materials should be provided to give children several options at this centre.

Using Classroom Texts - texts previously read as read alouds, part of Shared or Guided Reading can be used as examples of good writing. Books that were part of an author study are also valuable examples of different styles of writing. Children can then model their writing on these texts, or simply be encouraged by good writing. Fiction and non-fiction texts should be included.

Centre Ideas for Writing (2 of 2)



Technology to Write - using technology (computers, tablets, etc...) can be a great way to engage many 21st Century writers, particularly reluctant writers. Allowing students choice of platform for writing of various kinds. Technology also helps the revising and editing process to become easier for the children. Sharing with friends, the whole class, and parents becomes fast and efficient as well.

Silly Sentences - take five or six pieces of paper, staple them together, and cut into three horizontal strips. Sentences are written on the entire page.

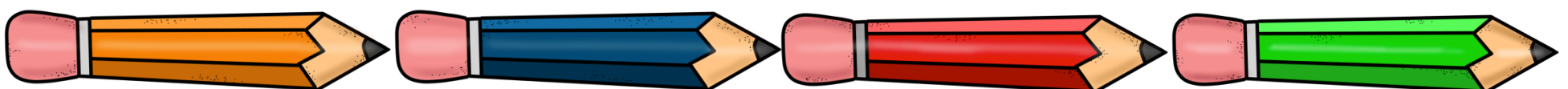
- Strip 1 - noun(s) & adjectives
- Strip 2 - verb & adverbs
- Strip 3 - descriptive info

Once students have completed 5-6 sentences that make sense, the students can re-arrange the order of the phrases to make silly sentences.

The small grey cat
greedily ran
through the kitchen to eat.

Snail Mail - children are used to a world of emailing and texting, but at this centre, they can discover the lost art of letter writing! students can compose letters to a person of their choice, and after the editing process with a buddy, they can make a good copy on nice stationary or note cards, place in an envelope and deliver the mail, either by the post office or hand-delivered.

Writing ABC books - on blank pages or in blank books, emerging writers can write the letters of the alphabet and add drawings, stickers, or pictures that match the beginning sound on each page. Let students add drawing or stickers to match the beginning sound on each page. Individual pages can be combined to create a class book.



Centre Ideas for Reading (1 of 2)



Reading Familiar Texts - books, big books, magazines, books from the listening centre and other types of printed text previously read by the teacher should be easily accessible for students during centre time. Re-reading familiar texts will help to increase students' reading fluency

Reading Independent Level Texts - or "*just right reads*". With the teacher's guidance, students should learn how to choose a just right read. This allows students to read during centre time with confidence and success.

Buddy Book Walk - students talk a 'walk through a book' and use the pictures to make predictions. Useful for building oral language and predicting skills

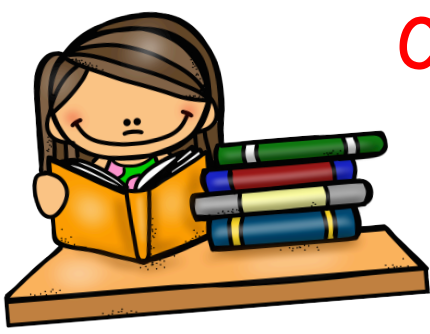
Looking at Pictures and Telling the Story - a great centre activity for emergent readers. In looking at the pictures and telling &/or retelling a story, it helps to develop oral language and comprehension skills.

Favourite Parts of the Book - having students retell a story to a partner (or partners) helps to develop oral language, as well as providing an opportunity to practice responding to books. Written book responses can also be created and shared.

Author Study - many classes will participate in Author Studies. In this activity, students can either read information the teacher has provided about an author, or students can research and author on their own, and present the information in the format of their choosing (written response, poster, student-created movie, etc...)

Listening Station - books on "tape" take many forms now - CDs, sound files for MP3 devices, tablets or computers, or built into many applications for technology. Headphone splitters allow for the entire group to listen to the book being read.





Centre Ideas for Reading (2 of 2)



Reading to Stuffed Animals - kids love their stuffies! Stuffed animals provide an engaged and patient audience for children. The teacher will need to model/explain that the stuffed animals are "reading buddies" and not toys at this particular centre.

Read Around the Room - students can use a variety of pointers as they travel around the classroom reading various posters and work posted by fellow classmates. Children can also use a checklist of high-frequency words to keep track of familiar words they've read

Being a Detective - students take on the personality of a "detective" to investigate an area of interest using non-fiction books, magazines and other forms of print. Students can then share the facts they uncovered with the class. Can be a topic that the class is studying in Social Studies or Science, or just an area that intrigues the students.

Book Review - students can write a review of the book they read during centre time, or create a movie using technology to share their book review.

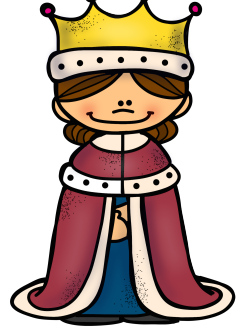
Book Recommendations - students can recommend a book to classmates, a friend, the teacher, or someone at home. Children can use nice stationary, note cards or an eCard online to deliver their recommendations.

Sticky Questions - the students can use sticky notes to write personal connections, questions or general "wonderings" in classroom library books. It is important to model the types of connections and questions, as well as placement in the books so others see them.

Reading with Character Voices - during read alouds &/or shared reading, the teacher can model the use of various character's voices. Students can then re-read the same books and begin creating their own character voices. Books with several characters are excellent for teaching children to read with fluency and expression. Their dramatic readings can then be shared with the whole class.



Centre Ideas for Dramatic Play (1 of 1)



Retelling Books - using a familiar book and a variety of props can be a wonderful way to have students retell books, both fiction and non-fiction. Puppets (student, teacher, or commercially produced), toys, animals, flannel boards, character cards etc...are all useful props for retelling. A classroom management strategy can be to have a prop box.

Reading a Familiar Play - plays read first during Shared Reading or Guided Reading help scaffold the instruction to set the students up for success. The plays dramatic play centre should be familiar and at their reading level so all children can successfully read them.

Performing Reader's Theatre - students can practice reading scripts, and then perform for an audience. This allows for reading expression to be monitored, as meaning needs to be conveyed without the use of props. Some old basal readers may include reader's theatre scripts, or there are many resources online, which can help ensure students are reading a script at the appropriate reading level.

Reading a Student-Authored Play - students can re-write a familiar story and/or play. Choosing a simple and familiar story will help the students have greater success (i.e. Little Red Riding Hood). Students can then perform for the class.

Reading a Script Using Character Cards - character names (and character traits for older students) can be written down and distributed among the students to determine who will read which part in a play. After the play has been read, students can switch cards, and read the play again, as their new characters. Cards can be stored at the centre for future use.

Create Advertisements for Plays - performances of plays lend themselves to a variety of writing opportunities. Students can create posters, postcards, movies etc...to advertise an upcoming performance of a play. Students enjoy creating movies on electronic devices to model "coming attraction" trailers they see in their day-to-day lives.

Recording Performances - students enjoy having recordings of their performances in general. It does provide a terrific opportunity for some self-assessment in regards to reading fluency and expression. A variety of technology tools can be used for this purpose, including can be a voice recorder or video recorder on computers, smart phones or tablet devices.

Musical Theatre - many children's songs and rhymes are perfect for students to perform while including appropriate songs and actions.